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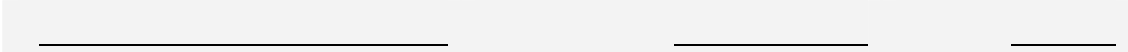
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The Historical Development of the Election Laws in Jordan 1928 – 2011*

Eman Azbi Frehat **

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the history and development of election laws in Jordan in the period from 1928 to 2011. Elections in Jordan have gone through six election laws and dozens of amendments, in addition to instructions issued about them. Many amendments have been introduced about the duration of sessions; the number of election districts; increases in the number of representatives of some election districts; the length of the nomination period; the fees that the candidates for nomination need to pay; the period for election campaigning; the committees established to oversee the voting and sorting of ballots; the authority to declare winning candidates; and polling stations, with the awareness that the development of election laws provides a clear indication of the political, economic and social development that Jordan has witnessed since its foundation up to the present day.

The study reached a number of conclusions, such as that the election laws in Jordan has varied among election methods. After beginning with indirect elections, by which representatives are elected in two stages, it shifted to secret direct elections in one stage, by which representatives are directly elected. That was in line with Jordan adopting a parliamentary system in 1947 based on two chambers of representatives and senators in place of the Legislative Council that combined the elected representatives and the representatives from the executive authority into one council. The manner of direct elections did not stipulate that the winning candidates should have a certain percentage of votes, but rather that receiving the highest number of votes was sufficient. The election laws began with open lists that gave the voter the right to choose a number of representatives that did not exceed the number of seats assigned for each election district and changed to a system based on one vote that allowed the voter to select only one candidate. That received wide criticism from different political spectrums, trade associations and civil society organizations, who considered it a reversal to the course of democracy. Despite the criticism, it has remained in force even after the 16th parliamentary elections.

The study recommended quickly establishing a modern election law that all political and social groups can agree to. It should respond to the development of politics and lead to national solidarity among the political and economic groups in all the regions of the kingdom, abolishing factionalism, partisanship and sectarianism. Any delay in establishing this law will be at the expense of the political stability in the country.

KEYWORDS: elections, election laws, election reform, Jordan.

* This research was completed with the support of the Deanship of Scientific Research, University of Applied Sciences.* **Assistant Professor, Applied Sciences University.
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